United Nations A/HRC/31/NGO/84

General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 February 2016

English only

Human Rights Council
Thirty-first session
Agenda item 7
Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories

Written statement* submitted by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[14 February 2016]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.16-02415(E)

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OPT: Is There an End to the Endless Tragedy

Despite the numerous calls by the majority of the States in the international community to draw the world attention to the longstanding human rights violations in OPT, it seems as if some world powers refuse to attend the General Debate Item 7.

The United States strongly and unequivocally opposes the very existence of Agenda Item 7, affirming that the country stands with Israel at the United Nations. It seems as if the US and Israel are the only countries in the world, for whom Israel operations in OPT is justified. This is while, Israel policies in OPT is repeatedly criticized by the UN, the Human Rights Council, representatives of the States and members of the civil society.

As the UN resolutions against Israel operations are being adopted, violation of human rights in OPT continues. As the United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, reiterated on 27 January 2016, Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, keep to expand and expand, disappointing the hopes of all young Palestinians in the face of nearly 50 years of Israeli occupation[1].

As it has been the cased for the past 50 years, UN is criticizing Israel operations in OPT. On February, 11, 2016, the U.N. human rights investigator for Gaza and the West Bank called on Israel on to investigate the excessive force used by Israeli security forces against Palestinians and to prosecute perpetrators. He also urged the Israeli authorities to charge or release all Palestinian prisoners being held under lengthy administrative detention, including children[2].

Killings, arrests and detention of Palestinians including the minors continue. Palestinian children are paying a huge price for the longstanding conflicts. Getting involved in war and protests, the children are far from the joys of childhood and frequently arrested by Israel. In February 2016, 450 Palestinian children were held in Israeli jails and according to the reports, three out of four children experience physical violence during their arrest, transfer or interrogation. In addition, according to Israeli officials from October 2015 to January 2016 at least 157 Palestinians have been killed in OPT.[3]

Alongside the killings, arrests, and despite the UN warnings, destruction of Palestinian structures continues. On February 8, 2016, the EU deplored the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, regretting that the operations will threaten the peace process between Israel and Palestine[4]. The EU spokesperson called on Israeli authorities to reverse the decision that has demolished several Palestinian residential structures in the area and to halt more demolitions.

The fact that Gaza has been under siege for years is another serious cause of depriving Palestinians of their human rights. U.N. experts believe that Israel's blockade of Gaza is illegal because subjects Gazans to collective punishment in "flagrant contravention of international human rights and humanitarian law." [5] Lack of access to basic supplies such as food and medicine has multiplies the complications of life for Gazan people. The patients, including the ones suffering from cancer, are in serious risks because of their lack of access to medicine and adequate medical care.
Following the Gaza siege which started in 2007 Palestinians are in need of basic things including food and medicine, they have been highly dependent on underground tunnels to import their most basic supplies. Bur recently, the Israel Prime Minister has put the destruction of Gaza Tunnels a top priority while they are only means for Gaza people to meet their basic needs. The deterioration of Gaza situation is to the point that UN has warned the Gaza will be uninhabitable by 2020[6].

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[1] . http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=53110#.Vry7KNKqqko
[2] . http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFKCN0VK1O3
[3] . http://forward.com/news/breaking-news/333324/un-official-accuses-israel-of-excessive-force-in-occupation/
[4] . http://www.enpi-info.eu/medportal/news/latest/43678/Palestine:--EU-concerned-about-expansion-of-Israeli-settlement
[5] . http://www.reuters.com/article/us-un-gaza-rights-idUSTRE78C59R20110913
[6] . http://time.com/4019509/gaza-uninhabitable-unctad/

During the Israel-Gaza war in 2014, 74% of Gaza homes were destroyed and they have not rebuilt yet. In February 2016, more than 16,000 families, amounting to approximately 90,000 people, who lost their homes in the War, remain displaced or homeless[7].

Echoing the UN Secretary Generals concerns for the long standing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in OPT, including the vast displacement of people, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence ODVV calls on Israel officials to abide by their international commitments.

Considering the vast scale of human right violations in OPT, (ODVV) urges the human rights council to discourage Israel from operations – including settlements expansions - that jeopardize the negotiations and peace process in the region.

Our Organization would also like to echo the Secretary-General's concerns on OPT, who believes that Palestinians are frustrated of the half century statements and resolutions condemning violations of their rights while there are no changes in the situation on the ground.

Since the continuation of conflicts in OPT will endanger the security of all sides, ODVV urges Israel allies to encourage Israel to recognize Palestinian.

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7. http://www.salon.com/2016/02/09/74_of_gaza_homes_destroyed_by_israel_in_summer_2014_war_have_not_been_rebuilt_as_violent_repression_escalates/